Pitiable working condition of employees of Garment Industry

191. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware about the pitiable working conditions and low wages of the employees working in the Garment Industries in the country; specially in Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken/being taken by Government to improve the working conditions and the wages of the employees of the Garment Industries sector in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) and (b) No specific complaints about the pitiable working conditions and low wages of the employees working in the Garment Industries in the country have been received.

(c) State Governments are empowered to fix the minimum wages and to provide suitable working environment for the workers engaged in the garment industries.

Steps to promote handloom industry in Assam

192. SHRI KUMAR DEEPAK DAS: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken to promote the Handloom Industry in Assam;

(b) the district-wise details of Central assistance given for helping the weavers community during the last 3 years in Assam; and

(c) whether the Ministry has any proposal or any special scheme to upgrade the Pat, Muga and Eri Silk Handloom in Assam?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) The Government of India is following a policy of promoting and encouraging the Handloom industry in the country including the State of Assam through a number of programmes and schemes to increase its production productivity and efficiency and enhance the income and socio-economic status of weavers by upgrading their skills, supply of inputs, providing infrastructure & marketing support.

(b) The Central assistance is being released to State Governments on receipt of viable proposals. As such, no district wise details of central assistance is maintained. However, the Government of Assam has been released Rs. 539.39 lakh, Rs. 555.50 lakh and Rs. 820.63 lakh under various scheme during 2004-05, 2005-06, and 2006-07, respectively.

(c) Government of Assam can avail central assistance under various schemes of the Textile Ministry as per the guidelines of those schemes.

Extension of TUFS to Eleventh Plan

193. SHRI S. ANBALGAN: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) Whether Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme (TUFS) is proposed to be extended to the Eleventh Five Year Plan;

(b) if so, the total alloction of resources made for this alongwith the break-up of annual allocation;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether it is also a fact that the country faces a stiff competition in export of textiles to the US and European Countries in the future; and

(e) if so, the measures contemplated in the Eleventh Plan to meet the challenges thrown by China in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) Government have approved the extension of Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme (TUFS) in the Eleventh Five Year Plan.

(b) The allocation of resources is provided for annually in the budget. For the current year, a sum of Rs. 945 crore has been allocated for the Scheme.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Currently, there is stiff competition in export to US and EU markets.

(e) Quantitatively restricted global textile trade was phased out from January 1st, 2005 providing for market driven export merchandise for our textiles products. In the globalized textiles trade milieu, the industry needs to enhance competitiveness by improving efficiency and productivity. The country has strong and diverse raw material base, large production capacities, vast pool of entrepreneurship and skilled manpower, flexibility in production processes, long experience with US & EU, competitive advantage in terms of labour cost etc. These inherent strengths enable our country to meet the challenges of globalization and compete with China in textiles trade.

Government have constantly endeavored to fashion its policies to strengthen the textiles industry. To improve productivity and quality of cotton, Government has launched the Technology Mission on Cotton (TMC). The Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme (TUFS) was commissioned to facilitate the modernization and upgradation of the textiles industry both in the organized and unorganized sector. The Scheme has been further fine-tuned to catapult the rapid investments in the targeted segments of the textile industry. The cost of machinery has been further brought down by reducing the customs duty on imports. The Government have also provided for a centrally sponsored scheme namely "Scheme for Interated Textile Park (SITP)" to create international standard infrastructure facilities for setting up textile units meeting global environmental and social standards. Simultaneously, Government have also brought in "Debt Restructuring Scheme" since September, 2003 with the principal objective to permit banks to lend to the textile sector at 8-9% rate of interest. Government have permitted 100% Foreign Direct Investment in the textile sector under automatic route. Government have de-reserved the readymade garments, hosiery and knitwear from SSI sector so that large scale investments may be encouraged in these sectors. The National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) has been set up to provide the leadership role in sensitizing the industry to the concept of value addition by inducting trained professionals to manage the industry. Government have also provided several relief measures to textile exporters such as increase in Duty Entitlement Pass Book and Duty Drawback rates, exemption from service tax on select services, reduction in interest rates of pre-shipment and post-shipment credit and faster clearance of arrears of terminal excise duties and Central

; Tax.